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# Instruction **General Accreditation Policies and Procedures**

#### 1. **Purpose**

This procedure provides general policies and procedures for certifying agents seeking accreditation to the National Organic Program (NOP) Regulations administered by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Marketing and Regulatory Programs (MRP), Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), NOP.

The NOP Accreditation and International Activities (AIA) Division and AMS, Livestock and Seed Program (LS), Audit, Review, and Compliance (ARC) Branch, as appropriate, apply these policies and procedures to determine and maintain accreditation of certifying agents to the NOP Regulations.

#### 2. Scope

This document applies to U.S. and foreign organic certifying agents who wish to obtain, maintain, or renew accreditation under the NOP Regulations. If there are any discrepancies between this procedure and the NOP Regulations, the NOP Regulations shall take precedence.

#### 3. **Background**

The NOP accredits certifying agents under the authority of the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990, as amended (7 U.S.C 6501 et seq.) as described in the Code of Federal Regulations Title 7, Part 205, NOP Regulations. NOP Regulations assign the AMS Administrator responsibility for execution of the National Organic Program. The AMS Administrator delegated certain responsibilities as described in the NOP Regulations and this procedure.

#### 4. **Policy**

#### 4.1 Responsibilities

1. AMS Administrator

The AMS Administrator is responsible for making final accreditation and appeals decisions and suspending or revoking accreditations of certifying agents.

2. NOP Deputy Administrator

The NOP Deputy Administrator is responsible for accrediting and assessing certifying agents, providing guidance and training to certifying agents, and reinstating suspended accreditations.

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NOTE: The NOP Deputy Administrator may assign specific tasks related to these activities to competent NOP personnel, but retains final responsibility for their proper execution.

# 3. Accreditation and International Activities (AIA) Division

The AIA Division is responsible for administering NOP accreditation activities. These activities include but are not limited to:

- a. Coordinating accreditation assessments of certifying agents with the ARC Branch.
- b. Directing the activities of the Accreditation Committee.
- c. Recommending accreditation, suspension, or revocation of certifying agents to the AMS Administrator.
- d. Managing the corrective action process for accreditation activities.
- e. Notifying the certifying agents of the results of accreditation assessments.
- f. Making publicly available and updating on a regular basis, a certifying agent's current status of accreditation.

NOTE: The AIA Division Director may delegate specific tasks related to these activities to competent NOP personnel, other AMS Programs, or qualified state or private organizations, but retains final responsibility for their proper execution.

### 4. Accreditation Committee

The Accreditation Committee reviews applications for new and renewal accreditation and prepares recommendations to the AMS Administrator for final decision on accreditation.

- a. The Accreditation Committee is comprised of NOP staff personnel who have expertise in the application of the NOP Regulations, agricultural production and processing practices, and/or the evaluation of audit-based certification programs.
- b. Members serve as needed on committees based on their availability and the need for specific areas of expertise. Refer to the NOP 2012 - Accreditation Committee *Procedure* for more information.

#### 4.2 LS, Audit, Review and Compliance (ARC) Branch

The ARC Branch conducts assessments upon request of the AIA Division Director. Specific responsibilities of the ARC Branch include:

- 1. Conducting and reporting the results of documentation adequacy reviews (desk assessments).
- 2. Planning, conducting and reporting the results of initial, mid-term, and renewal assessments.
- 3. Collecting published hourly user fees and travel expenses for NOP accreditation-related services in which it provides or participates.
- 4. Other duties, as determined appropriate between the NOP and ARC Branch.

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#### 4.3 **Certifying Agents**

Certifying agents are responsible for:

- 1. Meeting applicable requirements in 7 CFR Part 205.
- 2. Providing access to information, documents, and records as necessary for the assessment and maintenance of accreditation.
- 3. Providing access to those documents that provide insight into the level of independence and impartiality of the certifying agent from its related bodies, where applicable.
- 4. Arranging witness audits of certified operations as requested by the NOP or ARC Branch.
- 5. Attending required NOP Training.

#### 5. **Procedure**

#### 5.1 **Accreditation Process**

This section outlines the accreditation procedures for certifying agents responsible for the certification of agricultural products produced under the NOP Regulation.

NOTE: The AIA Division and the ARC Branch conduct activities in this section. The AIA Division manages the overall accreditation process and the ARC Branch conducts onsite assessments and other responsibilities as directed by NOP.

### 1. Availability of Service

a. Who may apply?

Accreditation services are available regardless of the number of certifications issued by an applicant. Eligibility for accreditation is not conditional upon size of the applicant or membership in any association.

## 2. Nondiscrimination

Accreditation services are available without discrimination on the basis of color, race, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, marital or family status, political beliefs, or protected genetic information. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audio tape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write to the USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue SW, Room 326-W, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity service provider and employer.

### 3. Travel restrictions

NOP accreditation is not available to certifying agents that are based in or conduct key activities in areas where the U.S. State Department has issued travel warnings, travel

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alerts, or other restrictions that could affect the health, safety, or security of Federal employees.

Accreditation applicants affected by such warnings, alerts, or restrictions will be denied consideration and have their applications and fees returned.

If assessments of certifying agents cannot be conducted as required by the NOP Regulations due to U.S. State Department travel warnings, travel alerts, or other restrictions, NOP may suspend their accreditation until conditions change and/or restrictions are lifted. Prior to suspending a certifying agent's accreditation, NOP will explore alternative methods for conducting assessments; however, if no viable alternative is available, accreditation will be suspended.

# 4. Assessment Cycle of Certifying Agents

Table 1 illustrates the type and frequency of accreditation activities conducted by the AIA Division and the ARC Branch, as applicable, during the 5-year accreditation cycle. The actual timeframes in which the assessments occur may differ based on the certifying agent's previous assessment. An effort is made to conduct renewal assessments as close as possible to the accreditation anniversary date.

Table 1 – Assessment Cycle

Table 1 – Assessment Cycle				
Application Stage		Initial 5-Year Cycle	Subsequent 5-Year Cycles	
0–3 Months Documentation Adequacy Review <sup>2</sup>	3-9 Months Pre-decisional Assessment <sup>1</sup>	0-24 Months Initial Assessment <sup>2</sup>	24-36 Months Mid-term Assessment <sup>2</sup>	
		54–72 Months Renewal Assessment <sup>2</sup>	54–72 Months Renewal Assessment <sup>2</sup>	

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Activities conducted by the AIA Division

## 5. Accreditation Applications

Initial accreditation applicants and certifying agent's seeking accreditation renewal must submit an application package to the AIA Division as follows:

# 6. Application Package

The application package must be submitted in English as one hard copy and one identical electronic version. The application package includes:

- a. All supporting documents and procedures as required in 7 CFR § 205.503 through § 205.505 and fees required in § 205.640. Regarding § 205.503(e), this includes countries where operations are certified through cooperative agreements and contracted inspections with other certifying agents.
- b. An original signed copy of the TM-10CG Application for Accreditation.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Activities conducted by the ARC Branch

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- c. An original signed copy of the LS-313 Application for Service.
- d. A \$500 USD application fee. This payment should be in the form of a check or money order payable to "AMS". Electronic payments may be facilitated by contacting the ARC Branch at (540) 361-7640 ext. 2743 or by email at ARCBranch@ams.usda.gov.
- e. Submit application package to: USDA, AMS, National Organic Program Accreditation and International Activities Division 100 Riverside Parkway, Suite 101 Fredericksburg, Virginia 22406

Phone: (540) 361-2712 Email: AIAInBox@usda.gov

7. Initial Application

Applicants must submit information required in Section 5.1(6).

8. Renewal Application

Certifying agents must:

- a. Submit information required in Section 5.1(6),
- b. Either renew their accreditation or voluntarily surrender their certificate of accreditation in accordance with § 205.510, and
- c. Apply for renewal one year to six months prior to the anniversary date of their accreditation period. Certifying agents who apply for renewal later than six months prior to the anniversary date of their accreditation period risk a lapse in accreditation.
- 9. Processing Applications

The AIA Division processes the application, and performs a cursory review to determine if all required information was submitted in the application package and to determine if the applicant is affected by travel restrictions outlined in Section 5.1(3).

- a. If the AIA Division accepts the application,
  - i. The applicant is notified of this that their application will be submitted to the ARC Branch: and
  - ii. The AIA Division requests that the ARC Branch conduct a documentation adequacy review.
- b. If the AIA Division does not accept the application, the applicant and the ARC Branch is notified of this determination.

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# 10. Documentation Adequacy Review (Desk Reviews)

The objective of the documentation adequacy review is to evaluate the compliance of the applicant's or certifying agent's, as applicable, documented quality manual to the OFPA, NOP Regulations, the NOP Program Handbook, and any other additional identified requirements. A review is conducted prior to each onsite assessment. The scope of this review is based on the scope of each assessment.

- a. The documentation adequacy review for initial applications are conducted as follows:
  - The applicant must respond to any identified deficiencies within designated timeframes. Applicants must address any non-compliances and significant deficiencies prior to further consideration for accreditation.
    - If an applicant is unresponsive to ARC Branch requests for additional information or submits inadequate information, the ARC Branch notifies the AIA Division that they are unable to complete the review due to insufficient information.
    - The AIA Division notifies the applicant that the documentation adequacy review is discontinued due to insufficient information.
  - ii. The ARC Branch completes the documentation adequacy review and submits a complete report to the AIA Division as soon as possible, but no longer than 90 days from the receipt of the application package from the AIA Division.
  - iii. The AIA Division reviews the documentation adequacy review report for content and clarity, and contacts the ARC Branch for clarifications, as needed. Based on the results of the review, the AIA Division either denies the application or schedules a pre-decisional assessment.

### 11. Onsite Assessments

The objective of the onsite assessment is to verify that the certifying agent is competent, maintains a robust, reliable quality system with records, and complies with the stated criteria. The assessment team assesses a combination of office locations/sites with key activities and certification files, and conducts witness inspections to make this determination.

- a. Onsite assessments are conducted in accordance with clause 6 of the ISO/IEC 19011, clause 7 of the ISO/IEC 17011, this document, and other applicable documents.
- b. Onsite assessments include activities described in § 205.508 Site Evaluations.
- c. The assessment team consists of a lead assessor and may include additional assessors or technical experts as determined by the scope of the assessment. Employees and technical experts who have provided consultancy services or were employed by the certifying agent within 2 years of the assessment are ineligible to participate on the assessment.

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d. Neither AIA Division staff nor ARC Branch staff offer or propose remedies to identified barriers to accreditation.

#### 12. Onsite Assessment Site Review

- a. If the certifying agent operates multiple offices, including its main office, then offices are selected to ensure that sufficient objective information is collected to verify that the documented procedures are implemented and requirements are met.
- b. The assessment team conducts assessments of the certifying agent where key activities are performed.

Key activities include, but are not limited to:

- Policy formulation
- ii. Process and/or procedural development
- Contract review iii.
- iv. Application review
- Planning of inspections v.
- Review, approval, and decisions on the results of inspections vi.
- vii. Decisions on adverse actions
- viii. Review, approval and decisions on materials, ingredients, and inputs
- Review, approval, and decisions on labels

#### 13. Pre-decisional Assessments

In addition to the main office, the assessment team visits all other offices from which key activities under the scope of the accreditation are performed.

## 14. Initial, Mid-term and Renewal Assessments

All offices from which key activities are conducted are assessed during the 5-year accreditation cycle.

- a. The main office is visited during each onsite assessment.
- b. The selection of other offices is based on the total number of offices and is made to ensure that all offices are assessed during the 5-year accreditation cycle.

## 15. Witness Audits

The objective of witness audits is to review the competence and performance of the inspector(s) in verifying the operations compliance with NOP Regulations. Specifically, the witness audit ascertains whether the inspector(s) conducted the required activities per § 205.403(c), (d), and (e).

- a. The assessment team normally conducts witness audits (witnessing) as a portion of onsite assessments. Witness audits can also be conducted independent of onsite assessments, such as to investigate complaints, verify corrective actions, or as directed by the AIA Division.
- b. The witness audit of the operation may be a demonstration when it is not possible to conduct an actual inspection.

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c. Witness audits are selected based on the number of certified operations per scope and the areas of operation. When certifying agents have multiple inspection offices, efforts are made to conduct witness audits associated with each office over time. Additionally, an effort is made to conduct witnesses outside the normal geographical area of operation.

d. One operation may be selected to witness multiple scopes.

### 16. Pre-decisional Assessment Witness Audits

During the pre-decisional assessment, a minimum of one witness audit is conducted.

#### 17. Initial Assessment Witness Audits

During the initial assessment, a minimum of one witness audit for each scope of accreditation is conducted. In addition, if the certifying agent certifies grower groups, at least one grower group is selected for witnessing.

### 18. Mid-term Assessment Witness Audits

During mid-term assessments, a minimum of two witness audits are conducted. Witness audits are selected based on the number of certified operations per scope and the geographical areas of operation.

#### 19. Renewal Assessment Witness Audits

During renewal assessments, a minimum of one witness audit for each scope of accreditation is conducted. Witness audits are selected based on the number of certified operations per scope and the areas of operation. In addition, if the certifying agent certifies grower groups, at least one grower group is selected for witnessing.

#### 20. Certification File Review

The assessment team conducts full and partial certification file reviews during onsite assessments. For full file reviews all of the following items shall be reviewed, for partial reviews the auditor determines which item(s) to review based on findings identified during the audit.

- a. The documentation found in case files (e.g. signed contracts, updated organic system plans, inspection reports, decision sheets, label approvals, copies of certificates, and other correspondence) is complete and up to date.
- b. Reports include a sufficient quantity of information needed to make a certification decision.
- c. The decision made by the certifying agent is appropriate with the evaluation of the organic system plans as submitted by the certifying operation, as applicable, and the report resulting from inspections of operation sites.
- d. The certifying agent has monitored the implementation of all necessary corrective actions that it requested from each operation producing certified products.

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e. The certifying agent is operating in accordance with relevant assessment criteria, such as personnel involved in the certification process; label compliance; handling of adverse actions, etc.

### 21. Pre-decisional Certification File Review

Certification files are selected for the purpose of verifying the applicant's ability to comply with their documented procedures.

### 22. Initial and Renewal Assessment Certification File Review

The assessment team selects certification files for review based on the following criteria:

- a. Consideration of the various scopes of certification conducted by the certifying agent.
- b. Consideration of the areas where certification is conducted by the certifying agent.
- c. Files requested to review by the AIA Division.

The quantity of files selected is based on Table 2.

Table 2 - Initial and Renewal Assessment Certification File Review

Number of certified operations	Number of files to be reviewed
100 or less	Between 7 and 10 files, 6 of which must be full reviews
240 or 101	Between 11 and 12 files, 10 of which must be full reviews
400 or 241	Between 13 and 15 files, 10 of which must be full reviews
1000 or 401	Between 16 and 20 files, 10 of which must be full reviews
More than 1000	Between 21 and 25 files, 10 of which must be full reviews

### 23. Mid-term Assessment Certification File Review

The assessment team selects certification files for review based on the following criteria:

- a. Consideration of the various scopes of certification conducted by the certifying agent.
- b. Consideration of the areas where certification is conducted by the certifying agent.
- c. Files requested to review by the AIA Division.

The quantity of files selected is based on Table 3.

Table 3 - Mid-term Assessment Certification File Review

Number of certified operations	Number of files to be reviewed
100 or less	Between 5 and 7 files, 5 of which must be full reviews

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Number of certified operations	Number of files to be reviewed
100 or less	Between 5 and 7 files, 5 of which must be full reviews
240 or 101	Between 8 and 10 files, 6 of which must be full reviews
400 or 241	Between 11 and 12 files, 6 of which must be full reviews
1000 or 401	Between 13 and 15 files, 6 of which must be full reviews
More than 1000	Between 16 and 20 files, 6 of which must be full reviews

### 24. Pre-decisional Assessment

- a. A pre-decisional assessment is conducted to determine if the applicant is competent and complies with or is capable of complying with the assessment criteria. The assessment team reviews key activities, conducts witness inspections, and reviews certification files.
- b. A pre-decisional assessment is conducted within 6 months of completion of the documentation adequacy review.
- c. The pre-decisional assessment is conducted in accordance with Section 5.1(10) through 5.1(20) of this document, as applicable.

### 25. Initial Assessment

- a. The initial assessment is conducted to determine if the certifying agent complies with the assessment criteria, to verify the implementation and effectiveness of any corrective actions, and determine if the certifying agent has the continued competence required by the scope of the assessment criteria.
- b. An initial assessment is conducted within 2 years from the date of accreditation.
- c. The initial assessment is conducted in accordance with Section 5.1(10) through 5.1(20) of this document, as applicable.

### 26. Mid-term Assessment

- a. Normally the scope of the mid-term assessment includes a review of the certifying agent's key activities, verification of the implementation and effectiveness of corrective actions, conducting witness inspections and certification file reviews, and conducting any other activity as directed by the AIA Division.
- b. A mid-term assessment is normally conducted between 24 to 36 months from the date of accreditation renewal. One is not conducted during the initial 5-year cycle.

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c. The mid-term assessment is conducted in accordance Section 5.1(10) through 5.1(20) of this document, as applicable.

#### 27. Renewal Assessment

- a. The renewal assessment is conducted to determine if the certifying agent complies with the assessment criteria, to verify the implementation and effectiveness of any corrective actions, and determine if the certifying agent has maintained the competence required of the assessment criteria.
- b. The renewal assessment is conducted approximately 6 months prior to or 12 months after the anniversary date of a certifying agent's accreditation.
- c. The assessment is conducted in accordance with Section 5.1(10) through 5.1(20) of this document, as applicable.

### 28. Assessment Reports

a. Report Preparation

The assessment team prepares a detailed report of the assessment and submits it to the AIA Division within 30 days of the completion of the assessment.

# 29. Review and Approval of Assessment Reports

The AIA Division reviews and approves the assessment reports and ensures the certifying agent receives a copy.

- a. If non-compliances are identified, a notice of non-compliance is issued, requesting the certifying agent to submit corrective actions within a specified timeframe.
- b. If non-compliances are not identified, the appropriate notice is issued if the report is associated with an initial or mid-term assessment. Reports associated with predecisional and renewal assessments are sent to the Accreditation Committee.

## 30. Corrective Action Review

- The certifying agent is responsible for submitting sufficient corrective action within designated timeframes when requested by the AIA Division.
- b. The AIA Division reviews the certifying agent's corrective action response and determines if the non-compliances were adequately addressed. A corrective action report is prepared and a copy is provided to the certifying agent.
  - The appropriate notice is issued if the corrective action report is associated with an initial or mid-term assessment.
  - ii. Corrective action reports associated with pre-decisional and renewal assessments are sent to the Accreditation Committee.
- c. Periodically, it is necessary to conduct an onsite corrective action assessment to verify the implementation and effectiveness of corrective actions.

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d. The NOP Deputy Administrator may propose adverse actions for any unresolved noncompliances.

### 31. Accreditation Committee Review

The Accreditation Committee reviews reports for pre-decisional assessments and renewal assessments and prepares recommendations to the AMS Administrator for final decision on accreditation.

### 32. Decision on Accreditation

- a. The AMS Administrator renders a decision to either grant or deny accreditation.
- b. Decisions are based on the AMS Administrator's review of the information submitted in accordance with § 205.506(a)(3), the assessment report, the Accreditation Committee's recommendations, and any other relevant supporting documentation.
  - Initial accreditation is granted for a period of 5 years from the date of approval by the AMS Administrator.
  - ii. Renewal of an unexpired previous accreditation is granted for a period of 5 years from the end date of the previous term of accreditation.
- c. The AIA Division notifies the certifying agent of the decision and issues the appropriate notice.

# 33. Publication of Accreditation Status

- a. Upon initial accreditation or any change in a certifying agent's accreditation status, the AIA Division updates and makes publicly available the status of accreditation or other action on NOP Web site at http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop. This includes:
  - i. The name and address of each accredited certifying agent;
  - ii. Dates of granting accreditation; and
  - iii. Scopes of accreditation.

#### 5.2 **Submission of Information**

Certifying agents are required to submit the following to the AIA Division address under Section 14 of this document:

- 1. Changes to policies, procedures, operating protocols; and in accordance with § 205.510(a).
- 2. Relevant notices as required § 205.501(15)(i).
- 3. A current list of operations certified as of January 2<sup>nd</sup> of each calendar year in accordance with § 205.501(15)(ii).
- 4. The results of all analyses and tests in accordance with § 205.670(d), (e)

#### 5.3 **Extending the Scope of Accreditation**

1. Certifying agents may request to extend the scope of their accreditation at any time. To do so, the certifying agent must submit a new application to the AIA Division requesting to extend the scope of accreditation.

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2. A documentation adequacy review is conducted and a pre-decisional assessment may be conducted prior to extending scope.

#### **5.4 Reducing the Scope of Accreditation**

- 1. Certifying agents may request to reduce the scope of their accreditation at any time. To do so, the certifying agent must submit a written request to the AIA Division requesting to reduce the scope of accreditation.
- 2. The AIA Division reviews the request and prepares for review by the Deputy Administrator.
- 3. Upon approval, the certifying agent's certificate of accreditation and list of certified operations, and any other associated information is updated to reflect the reduction in scope.

#### 5.5 **Cessation of Certification Activities**

A certifying agent whose accreditation is surrendered, suspended or revoked must adhere to the requirements described in § 205.665.

#### 5.6 **Suspending or Revoking Accreditation**

When a certifying agent fails to comply with the requirements for accreditation as described in the NOP Regulations, the NOP Deputy Administrator follows the noncompliance procedures described in § 205.665.

#### **Surrendering Accreditation** 5.7

- 1. Certifying agents who no longer wish to maintain their NOP accreditation must surrender their accreditation by submitting a written notification of such to the AMS Administrator. Certifying agents who wish to surrender their accreditation should work with their certified operations to transfer their certification to another NOP certifying agent.
- 2. Certifying agents who discontinue certification services without notifying the NOP and do not surrender their certificate of accreditation or provide the NOP with records of their certification activities will be issued a Notice of Noncompliance and Proposed *Revocation* for failure to comply with § 205.505 Statement of Agreement.

#### 5.8 **Appeals**

- 1. Persons as described in § 205.680 and § 205.681, may appeal an adverse action e.g. a denial of certification or proposed suspension, to the AMS Administrator.
- 2. Appeals must be filed in writing within 30 days of receipt of the notice, and in accordance with requirements described in § 205.680 and § 205.681, and addressed to:

Administrator, USDA-AMS c/o NOP Appeals Team

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1400 Independence Avenue, S.W. Mail Stop 0203 - Room 1114 Washington, DC 20250

#### 5.9 **Complaints**

# 1. Complaints Regarding Violations of NOP Regulations

Certifying agents, certified operations, or any other interested party may file a complaint regarding certification, use of labels, etc. with the NOP, Compliance and Enforcement Division. Refer to NOP 4001 - NOP Complaint Handling Standard Operating *Procedures* contain specific guidance on submitting complaints.

2. Complaints Regarding the Accreditation Process

Certifying agents or certified operations may file a complaint regarding the accreditation process with the AIA Division. Complaints may be submitted to the address under Section 14 of this document.

#### 5.10 **Fees for Accreditation**

Fees for accreditation are assessed in accordance to § 205.640 and § 205.641 and in accordance with § 300 and § 301 of 7 CFR Part 62, as appropriate.

### **Contact Information**

For more information regarding NOP accreditation policies and procedures contact:

Director, Accreditation and International Activities Division USDA, AMS, National Organic Program Room 2646-South, Ag Stop 0268 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, DC 20250

Phone: (202) 720-3252 FAX: (202) 205-7808

Email: AIAInBox@ams.usda.gov

#### 6. References

**Organic Foods Productions Act (1990 as amended)** 

**NOP** Regulations (as amended to date)

### **NOSB Recommendations**

November 2008 Meeting, Final NOSB Recommendation on Certifying Operations with Multiple Production Units, Sites, and Facilities under the National Organic Program.

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# Other Laws, Regulations and Standards

International Organization for Standardization (ISO)/International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) 17011 – Conformity Assessment – General requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies: 2004

ISO 19011:2002, Guidelines for quality and/or environmental management systems auditing

# NOP Program Handbook: Guidance and Instructions for Accredited Certifying Agents and Certified Operations

NOP 2012: Accreditation Committee Procedure. August 24, 2010. NOP 4001: NOP Complaint Handling Procedures. July 22, 2011.

### **Other References:**

Form TM-10CG - Application for Accreditation Form LS-313 - Application for Service

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# Attachment A

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# **Instructions for Completing TM-10CG** Application for Accreditation

Form TM-10CG must be included in the NOP Application Package for initial and renewal applications. While the TM-10CG does not need to be submitted with annual updates, certifiers must notify the AIA Division in writing any time information submitted on this form changes due to business relocations, personnel changes, or other events.

Except where noted, all applications must include the following basic business information:

- a. Under "BUSINESS NAME, MAILING ADDRESS, AND PRIMARY OFFICE LOCATION" print or type the name of the applicant applying for accreditation; the applicant's primary office location and address (please include both mailing and physical addresses, if different).
- b. Under "NAME and TITLE OF PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR DAY-TO-DAY OPERATIONS" enter the name and title of the primary contact person responsible for the applicant's day-to-day operations.
- c. Under "Tax ID" enter the applicant's tax identification number".
- d. Under "TELEPHONE NUMBER AND FAX NUMBER" enter the telephone and facsimile numbers of the primary office location or of the primary contact person.
- e. Under "E-MAIL ADDRESS" enter the applicant's or the primary contact person's email address.
- f. Enter the estimated number of operations the applicant plans to be certify annually for each area of operation (crops, livestock, wild crop and handling);
- g. Check the type of entity applying for accreditation (government agricultural office, notfor-profit business, for-profit business, or other, such as a membership association);
- h. After reading the affirmation statements, sign and date the form, and print or type the name and title of the person signing the form.

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### **Attachment B**

# **Instructions for Completing** LS-313 – Application for Service

The LS-313 form provides the ARC Branch authority to bill for its services. The ARC Branch conducts documentation adequacy reviews and assessments as directed by NOP. The LS-313 must be included in the NOP Application Package for initial and renewal applications. While the LS-313 does not need to be submitted with annual updates, certifiers must notify the AIA Division in writing any time the billing address or the responsible party of the certification body changes. To complete Form LS - 313:

- a. Under "NAME AND ADDRESS OF ESTABLISHMENT" print or type the street address where the certification office is located. This will be the location where onsite audits will be conducted. Do not put a post office box number here. If the certification body maintains more than one office, this information should be included in another part of the application package.
- b. Under "TAX ID #" print or type the applicant's tax identification number.
- c. Under "TYPE OF SERVICE APPLIED FOR" click on or check the box next to "Other" and print or type "Organic Accreditation." On the right hand side of this same area click on or check the box next to "Other" and print or type in "Certifying Agent."
- d. Leave the box labeled "LEGAL STATUS" blank. This information is collected elsewhere.
- e. Leave the box labeled "FINANCIAL INTEREST" blank. This information is not applicable to NOP accreditation.
- f. Under "NAME AND ADDRESS OF APPLICANT" enter the name and address of the person to whom accreditation billing information should be sent. This may be a street address or a post office box number where mail is received.
- g. Under "SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT OR REPRESENTATIVE AND DATE" sign and date the form after it is completed and printed out.
- h. Under "PRINT OR TYPE NAME OF SIGNEE" print or type the name of the person who signed the form.
- i. Under "SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER" print or type the social security number of the applicant or representative who signs the form. This is not necessary if the applicant is a business and a tax identification number has been provided.
- j. Under "TELEPHONE NUMBER" print or type the phone number of the applicant or representative who signs the form.
- k. Under "E-MAIL ADDRESS" print or type the e-mail address of the applicant or representative who signs the form.

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